

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2586

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IR, IN
SUBJECT: INDO-IRANIAN RELATIONS: MEA VIEW OF THE SHAH'S VISIT

REF: (A) NEW DELHI 1901, (B) NEW DELHI 1980, (C) NEW DELHI 1975

1. IN A DISCUSSION WITH THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR, MEA JOINT SECRETARY (PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN/IRAN) I.P. SINGH TOOK A NOTABLY UPBEAT VIEW OF THE RECENT VISIT OF THE SHAH AND ITS FAVORABLE IMPLICATIONS FOR INDO-IRANIAN RELATIONS. ACCORDING TO SINGH, THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THE VISIT HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL

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SUCCESSFUL. HE ADDED THAT THE INDIANS WERE CONFIDENT THAT THE IRANIAN SIDE TOOK A SIMILAR VIEW.

2. IN SINGH'S ASSESSMENT, THE VISIT WAS EFFECTIVE IN ATTAINING ALL OF ITS ORIGINAL OBJECTIVES:

--- STRENGTHENING RAPPORT BETWEEN THE SHAH AND INDIAN

GOVERNMENTS LEADERS. ACCORDING TO SINGH, THE SHAH AND PM DESAI, "BOTH PRAGMATIC MEN", GOT ON VERY WELL, AND ESTABLISHED A FRANK AND EASY RELATIONSHIP. SINGH HINTED THAT THE INDIANS HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND THAT DESAI'S VERY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION OF THE SHAH WAS RECIPROCATED BY HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY.

--- ADVANCING BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS. IRANIAN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROJECTS WERE IN VARIOUS STAGES OF CONSIDERATION AND THE SHAH'S VISIT PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE A BETTER LOOK AT THEM AND WORK OUT METHODS OF FUTURE FINANCING. HE ADMITTED THAT NO NEW AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED DURING VISIT, BUT THOUGHT THAT BOTH SIDES NOW HAD A MUCH BETTER IDEA OF THE DIRECTION THEY WANTED TO TAKE. THE KEY FEATURE WAS TO BE MUTUAL BENEFIT, I.E. IRANIAN-FINANCED FACILITIES IN INDIA WOULD FEED INTO THE IRANIAN ECONOMY AND IN SOME CASES THEN FEED BACK TO THE INDIAN ECONOMY. (E.G. THE REEXPORT TO INDIA OF IRANIAN-SMELTED INDIAN ALUMINA MINED WITH IRANIAN FINANCING). SINGH EXPRESSED GREAT SATISFACTION OVER THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS MENTIONED IN THE COMMUNIQUE (REF B) AND HIGHLIGHTED THIS AS A MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT.

--- FURTHERING REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION. SINGH DENIED THAT THE SHAH HAD COME TO THE SUBCONTINENT WITH ANY IDEA OF SELLING A FULL-BLOWN COMMON MARKET SCHEME. THE
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SHAH AND THE INDIANS AGREED THAT REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION SHOULD BE DEVELOPED NATURALLY, THAT IT OFFERED GREAT ADVANTAGES TO THE AREA COUNTRIES, AND THAT IT SHOULD BE BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF BILATERAL ECONOMIC TIES. THE SHAH AND THE INDIANS WERE BOTH INTERESTED IN MOVING AHEAD ON IMPROVED TRANSIT FACILITIES TO LINK THE REGIONAL COUNTRIES. ASKED HOW THIS SQUARED WITH THE EVIDENT PAKISTANI RELUCTANCE TO GET INVOLVED IN SUCH ARRANGEMENTS, SINGH SAID THAT THE SHAH HAD BEEN "HURT" BY THE PUBLIC GOP ANNOUNCEMENT RULING OUT THE COMMON MARKET SCHEME. ON TRANSIT FACILITIES, HE QUOTED THE SHAH AS HAVING SAID THAT THE PAKS "CAN'T EXPECT TO GET WITHOUT GIVING SOMETHING IN RETURN". SINGH EXPRESSED HIS OWN CONFIDENCE THAT THE PAKS WOULD EVENTUALLY AGREE TO RECIPROCAL TRANSIT ARRANGEMENTS ADDING THAT HE THOUGHT THAT NEITHER INDIA NOR IRAN WAS INTERESTED IN FORCING THE PACE ON THIS ISSUE.

--- GIVING THE SHAH AN OPPORTUNITY GENERALLY TO SIZE UP THE INDIAN SCENE. THE INDIANS HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE ACCORDING TO SINGH, THAT THE SHAH LIKED WHAT HE SAW. (SINGH SAID THE SHAH BRUSHED OFF THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATION AS INCONSEQUENTIAL.)

3. SINGH SAID THAT IN COMPARISON TO BILATERAL ISSUES AND REGIONAL MATTERS, LITTLE TIME WAS SPENT ON BROADER INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. THIS ACCOUNTS, HE SAID, FOR THE FAIRLY CUT AND DRIED REFERENCES TO THESE ISSUES IN THE COMMUNIQUE. ONE ISSUE WHICH APPARENTLY GOT MORE THAN ROUTINE COVERAGE WAS THE HORN OF AFRICA. SINGH SAID THE SHAH EXPRESSED SERIOUS CONCERN -- NO SURPRISE

-- ABOUT SOVIET ACTIVITY AND INTENTIONS IN THE AREA.

4. SINGH SEEMED SURPRISED WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MENTION IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE PASSAGE ON NUCLEAR AIMS OF "A COMPLETE BAN ON UTILIZATION
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OF RESEARCH FOR NON-PEACEFUL PURPOSE." (REF C.) HIS INITIAL COMMENT WAS THAT THERE WAS "SOME IDEA" THAT TOO MUCH MONEY WAS BEING SPENT ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS RESEARCH. HE THEN SUGGESTED, ODDLY, THAT THE TWO SIDES WANTED TO GO ON RECORD TO ASSURE THAT IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THEY DID NOT OBJECT TO PEACEFUL NUCLEAR RESEARCH. HE ADDED FINALLY THAT THERE REALLY HAD NOT BEEN MUCH DISCUSSION OF THE POINT AND SUGGESTED THAT IT HAD NO PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE AS A NEW ELEMENT IN INDIA'S FORMULATION OF ITS NON-PROLIFERATION GOALS. (BUT THIS IS NOT SINGH'S FIELD, AND WE MAY GET A DIFFERENT RESPONSE ELSEWHERE).
GOHEEN

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